

White Paper Proposal

Safety First – Emergency Preparedness Planning Project

Introduction

Since 1978, the Arizona Center for Disability Law (“ACDL”) has served as a government mandated, nonprofit organization to provide legal services, resources and overall assistance to the state’s developmentally disabled population including those with a wide range of physical, mental, psychiatric, sensory and cognitive disabilities. The ACDL’s strives in its mission to advocate for the legal rights of persons with disabilities to be free from abuse, neglect and discrimination and to have access to education, health care, housing, jobs and other services in order to maximize independence and achieve equality. As an organization, the ACDL envisions a society which focuses on people’s abilities rather than disabilities and that individuals with disabilities will be included within the community, particularly in the current area of emergency planning.

The title for the proposed project will be “Safety First” Emergency Preparedness Planning. The purpose for the project is to both introduce and provide emergency preparedness planning at the local levels, particularly in the home setting, for the developmentally disabled community throughout the state of Arizona in the event of actual emergencies/crises, such as natural disasters, extreme power outages, disease outbreaks, terrorist attacks and so forth. The target audience for this project are individuals with developmental disabilities (including those with a wide range of physical, mental, psychiatric, sensory and cognitive disabilities), their family members, & the community who assist such individuals.

Emergency preparedness planning for Arizona’s developmentally disabled community has never before existed at the local levels. Following extreme events such as 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and even the wildfires that recently spread across Arizona’s eastern high country in June of 2011 “forcing the evacuation of hundreds of residents,”¹ the state is practically forced to confront the topic of emergency preparedness planning for the state’s developmentally disabled population at the local level. According to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), “substantial improvement is necessary to integrate people with disabilities in emergency planning and readiness.”² The proposed project will vitally equip the disabled community with the knowledge and skills that will provide an escape route or safety procedures in the event of an emergency situation. Individuals with developmental disabilities will be more informed on how to properly care for themselves within their individual living situations and in turn, be more adequately prepared. More specifically, an emergency plan that is properly in place will enable the developmentally disabled community to also have a proper escape route to safety like the majority of society as well as reduce or perhaps eliminate the amount of deaths, injuries or fear among the disabled community during times of crisis.

¹ Radnovich, C. (2011, June 3). Hundreds flee as fire rages in eastern Arizona. *The Arizona Republic*, <http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/news/articles/2011/06/03/20110603arizonafires0603.html>

² FEMA, <http://www.fema.gov/news/newsrelease.fema?id=45435>

Project Description

The proposed project in emergency preparedness planning entails the following steps: curriculum development in the form of a manual and a reliable resource list of emergency contacts; the compilation of a 72-hour safety kit model to present during formal training sessions; the initial training of members within Arizona's developmentally disabled community; and the evaluations that will be performed, proving the overall effectiveness of the "Safety First" Emergency Preparedness Planning Project. Utilizing the train-the-trainer model, initial training of individual members from the developmentally disabled community will be performed by both ACDL and a designated partner(s). The initial training will lead to the training of more members within the community at a later date by those who have been previously trained in emergency preparedness planning. Thus, the actual title of the project's training model, "train-the-trainer," indicates that trained members of the community, which includes peers, family members of the developmentally disabled, caregivers, and so forth, will go out and continue the training until all members of the population, within the state of Arizona, have been properly trained in emergency preparedness. In our goals for the proposed project, we strive to see that Arizona's developmentally disabled population will be properly trained in emergency preparedness utilizing the train-the-trainer model and also, have individualized emergency safety plans firmly in place as a result of the training. The evaluations that follow will be performed approximately one year after the start of the initial training by both ACDL and the designate partner(s). Allowing one year in between the start of the initial training by ACDL and designate partner(s) and the actual evaluations will provide more time for any newly trained members of the community to go out and train others in emergency preparedness as well. The specialized, sign-in sheets will not only measure how many individuals have been properly trained in emergency preparedness, but also whether they were formally trained by representatives from the ACDL or the designated partner(s) or previously trained members of the community. The specialized sign-in sheets will also inquire what is the best way to contact the trainee at a later date. The ACDL and designated partner(s) will eventually contact these individuals or former trainees, with the trainee's chosen method of contact, to perform a short, follow-up survey regarding whether each trainee has an emergency preparedness plan currently in place and if they feel safer as a result.

Partnerships and Collaboration

For the purpose of the project, the ACDL proposes to partner with several organizations that provide support and services to persons with developmental disabilities, their families and the community who support them. Listed below are the organizations that are seen as key to fulfilling the goals of this project:

Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (ADDPC)

The ADDPC as created by federal law, exists to provide advocacy for persons with developmental disabilities and their families while supporting full involvement and inclusion in the community. The ADDPC funds projects that can be developed and sustained to bring about increased capacity and systems change for persons with developmental disabilities. This project proposes to seek funding for this one year project from the ADDPC (see below for details) to initiate activities, while building a network of support that will bring about permanent change and sustainability. Please note that while seeking funding, the ACDL is not necessarily asking for direct funding and cooperate with any options that exist, including the establishment of Interagency Service Agreements with other state agencies.

Arizona Department of Health Services, Bureau of Public Health Emergency Preparedness

In partnering with the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) this project will be made available to the community within a public health forum to expand the outreach component. ADHS may also be utilized as a conduit funding to comply with Arizona State Procurement Rules through the establishment of an Interagency Service Agreement.

Arizona Department of Economic Security, Developmental Disabilities Division

As the designated state agency to carry out statutory case management, funding and other activities, the Developmental Disabilities Division (DDD) is a key player in participating in this project to provide support and linkage to consumers as training and other resources are developed.

Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System

As the funding agency for Medicaid resources in Arizona, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) through the administration of the Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCSS) maintains extensive engagement with consumers and caregivers who provide support to persons with developmental disabilities. Partnering with AHCCCS will allow this project to be effectively outreached to consumers throughout Arizona.

Institute for Human Development, Northern Arizona University

As a member of the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Network, the Institute for Human Development is a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) as defined in federal law. With their expansive programs and support offered to persons with developmental disabilities, their families and professionals who offer support, they maintain exceptional outreach capacity in Northern Arizona.

Sonoran University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, University of Arizona

The Sonoran UCEDD is also a member of the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Network and also maintains expansive programming and support in Southern Arizona. They have capacity to maintain outreach into the developmental disabilities community and will be a necessary component to engage the developmental disabilities community.

State Independent Living Council (SILCO)

SILC has extensive background in emergency preparedness and curriculum development. They will be involved as a consultant in the following: (1) The creation of a manual and a reliable resource list of emergency contacts; (2) The compilation of a 72-hour emergency planning kit model to present at training sessions; (3) Formal training conducted by both the ACDL and a designated partner(s) at group and residential homes utilizing a train-the-trainer model; (4) Evaluations of the project's overall success approximately one year after the initiation of the actual project. These future trainers will train other members from the developmentally disabled community at a later date.

Applicability of Project to Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council Goals

This project proposes to link to one specific goal established within the Arizona Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (ADDPC) 2012-16 Five Year Plan:

Goal Three

This goal states the follow:

Empower persons with developmental disabilities, their families, and others who support them by linking them to information that promotes informed decision making about their choices and quality of life.

Two objectives within this goal are met by this project:

2. Provide information and/or link people to reliable information in a variety of formats on topics that are important to persons with developmental disabilities, their families, and others who support them.
3. Educate at least 209 people persons with developmental disabilities, their families, and others who support them about how to access the information they need/want.

Projected Costs

The total cost of the project is estimated at \$48,070.